

COMMENT ON THE PROPOSAL TO CONSERVE COLOBIDAE BLYTH,
1875, AS THE FAMILY-GROUP NAME FOR THE LEAF-EATING
MONKEYS (MAMMALIA, PRIMATES). Z.N.(S.) 2094
(see vol. 33: 85-89)

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The application by Dr. Eric Delson for the Commission to use its plenary powers to ensure the conservation of COLOBIDAE Blyth, 1875, as the family-group name for the leaf-eating monkeys, while wholly commendable in its intentions, suffers from a number of omissions, some of which have a significant bearing on the necessity for such a proposal. Blyth, 1875 (*J. Asiat. Soc. Beng.* vol. 44(2) Extra number: 9) is not the earliest work to employ the family-group name COLOBIDAE. The name can be traced to Blyth, 1863 (*Catalogue of the Mammalia in the Museum of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*: 11). However, inspection shows that in neither Blyth (1863) nor Blyth (1875) is the family-group name properly proposed, since the nominal type-genus, the African *Colobus* Illiger, 1811, is not listed in either reference. The earliest properly proposed usage would appear to be that of Jerdon, 1867 (*The Mammals of India*: 3) where it is employed at subfamilial rank (COLOBINAE).

This emendation of the date and authorship of the family-group name COLOBINAE does not affect the seniority of the family-group names PRESBYTINA Gray, 1825, and SEMNOPITHECIDAE Owen, 1843. There are, however, significant exceptions (e.g. Miller 1903, *Smithson. misc. Coll.* vol. 45: 67; Elliot, 1907 *A Catalogue of the Collection of Mammals in the Field Columbian Museum*: 570; Hill, 1936, *Spolia zeylan.* vol. 20: 116; and Hill, 1939, *Spolia zeylan.* vol. 21: 279) to the assertion that PRESBYTINA has been employed by only Gray himself since its definition. The usage of the name (at subfamilial rank, PRESBYTINAE) by Elliot (1907) is of particular importance because it demonstrates that his later (Elliot, 1913, *A Review of the Primates*, 3 vols.) adoption of the name COLOBINAE was not in ignorance of the senior name, but was a deliberate change following his (Elliot, 1910, *Bull. Am. Mus. nat. Hist.* vol. 28: 151) rejection of both *Presbytis* and *Semnopithecus* as junior synonyms of *Pygathrix* E. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1812. Elliot (1913) presumably followed Palmer, 1904 (*Index Generum Mammalium*: 721) in regarding the validity of a family-group name as dependent on whether its nominal type-genus is recognised. Perhaps largely through the influence of Elliot (1913), the family-group name COLOBINAE has now won general acceptance, and can be maintained under the provisions of Article 40 (a) of the Code.

With COLOBINAE Jerdon, 1867 (1825) conserved in this way, there would seem little reason to contravene the Law of Priority in determining the relative rank of PRESBYTINA Gray, 1825, and SEMNOPITHECIDAE Owen, 1843 Delson himself, 1975 (In: Szalay (Ed.) *Approaches to Primate*

Paleobiology: 171) has set a precedent in reviving the name PRESBYTINA Gray, 1825 for family-group taxa at infra-subfamilial rank which include *Presbytis* but exclude *Colobus*.

The request for the Commission to use its plenary powers to set aside all designations of type-species for the genus *Semnopithecus* Desmarest, 1822, made prior to the designation by Pocock, 1939 (*The Fauna of British India . . . Mammalia*, 1: 88) is obviated by the type-species designation by I. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1851 (*Catalogue méthodique . . . du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris*. Première partie. —Mammifères. Introduction et catalogue des primates) which antedates both that of Palmer (1904) and of Pocock (1939). Although the type-species is not mentioned nominally in the statement: "Genre . . . dont l'Entelle. . . doit être considéré comme le type" (I. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1851: 11), the "Entelle" is clearly identified on page 13 as *Simia entellus* Dufresne, 1797.

In view of the above, the request to the Commission (vol. 33: 85-89, para. 7) might be amended as follows:

Section 1 to be omitted.

Section 2(a) should now read: "*Semnopithecus* Desmarest, 1822 (gender: masculine), type-species, designated by I. Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1851), *Simia entellus* Dufresne, 1797"

Section 4 should now read:

"place the following family-group names on the Official List of Family-group Names in Zoology:

- (a) COLOBINAE Jerdon, 1867 (1825) (type-genus *Colobus* Illiger, 1811) with the endorsement that it is to be considered the senior synonym of PRESBYTINA Gray, 1825 by any zoologist who considers that these two names denote a single family-group taxon of relevant rank;
- (b) PRESBYTINA Gray, 1825 (type-genus *Presbytis* Eschscholtz, 1821) with the endorsement that it is not to be used at a given rank by any zoologist who considers that *Colobus* Illiger, 1811 and *Presbytis* Eschscholtz, 1821 belong to the same family-group taxon of that rank;
- (c) SEMNOPITHECIDAE Owen, 1843 (type-genus *Semnopithecus* Desmarest, 1822)."

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